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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 000581

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SUBJECT: POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS FROM A TO W -- WITH X, Y AND Z LIKELY

REF: ABUJA 572

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES RICK ROBERTS FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) and (D).

**1.** (S/NF) SUMMARY: Nigeria has been rocked by a wave of assassinations since February, although political violence has been common since the return to civilian rule in 1999. We see two distinct patterns to the assassinations, those stemming from local political rivalries, and those seeking to sway national politics (analysis septel). President Obasanjo, and virtually all politicians, have called on the Nigeria Police Force to take action against the wave of assassinations. Many politicians at all levels, both inside and outside government, are involved in assassinating their enemies, however, and we believe the wave will continue. END SUMMARY.

**2.** (U) The latest wave of assassinations began in February with the murder of PDP South-South Zonal Chairman Aminasoari Dikibo. Following is a list of the most public of the attacks.

a. 2/7/2004 Gunmen killed PDP Zonal Chairman Dikibo. The police have made no progress in their investigation and a judicial panel complained that "the government" is impeding its work.

b. 2/13/2004 Chief K.O. Enefe, a prominent PDP chieftain from Anambra was attacked in Lagos. He survived.

c. 3/3/2004 Benue Governor Akume's motorcade came under attack resulting in the death of PDP Board of Trustees member Andrew Agom. No arrests have been made.

d. 3/4/2004 PDP Local Government (LGA) Chairman candidate for Bassa LGA, Kogi State Luke Shigbaba, was killed by unknown assailants in his home. No arrests have been made.

e. 3/4/2004 A PDP LGA Chairman candidate in Edo State, Daniel Asekhome, was attacked by gunmen at the Beverly Hotel in Ekpoma. Asekhome survived, but was critically injured and four others were killed. No arrests have been made.

f. 3/4/2004 Mr. Uche Ogbeh, Chairman of the Academic Staff Union at Alvan Ikoku College of Education was killed in his office by unknown assailants. Ogbeh, a relative of PDP Chairman Audu Ogbeh, was in Owerri, Imo State. No arrests have been made.

g. 3/5/2004 The motorcade of AD Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos state was attacked twice en route from Anambra in the Southeast to Lagos. Tinubu was not in the motorcade at the time. No arrests have been made.

h. 3/7/2004 Chairman of Kogi State Independent Electoral Commission Phillip Olorunnipa was killed by unknown assailants in his home. No arrests have been made.

i. 3/20/2004 Anambra PDP Governor Ngige's motorcade was involved in a traffic accident in Anambra state that demolished his bullet-proof vehicle. At least one of the drivers was killed. Ngige had been "kidnapped" by police in July 2003 in a strange incident apparently designed to force his resignation.

j. 3/21/2004 PDP Northwest Zonal Chairman Bala Yauri died in a one-car accident near his home in Kebbi state.

**3.** (U) Other prominent assassinations during the Fourth Republic (i.e. from 1999) include:

j. 9/9/1999 Sunday Ugwu, brother to Enugu State Legislator Stanley Ugwu (PDP) was killed by unknown assailants. No arrests have been made.

k. 3/5/2001 PDP member Momoh Lawal was killed by unknown assailants in Okene, Kogi State. No arrests have been made.

l. 12/21/2001 State Assemblyman Odunayo Olagbaju was killed in Ile-Ife, Osun State. No arrests have been made.

m. 12/23/2001 Attorney General Bola Ige was killed in Ibadan, Osun State. Several arrests have been made in three different groups. The latest group is standing trial, although one prominent suspect was elected Senator from his jail cell.

n. 8/13/2002 Janet Oladapo, a PDP member, was killed in Odigbo LGA, Ondo State. No arrests have been made.

o. 8/2002 Kwara State PDP Chairman Ahmed Pategi was killed by unknown assailants. No arrests have been made.

p. 8/2002 Victor Nwankwo, brother of Eastern Mandate Union leader Arthur Nwankwo, was killed by unknown assailants. No arrests have been made.

q. 9/1/2002 Branch chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association Barnabus Igwe and his pregnant wife Abigail were killed and their bodies mutilated by unknown assailants in Anambra State. No arrests have been made.

r. 9/2002 PDP chieftain Chimere Ikoku was killed by unknown assailants in Anambra State. No arrests have been made.

s. 11/2002 ANPP Senatorial hopeful Ogonnaya Uche was killed by unknown assailants in Imo State. No arrests have been made.

t. 11/2002 AD member Emily Omope died from injuries sustained in an acid attack in Ogun State. No arrests have been made

u. 11/2002 PDP Gubernatorial aspirant Dele Orojo from Ogun State was killed by unknown assailants in Lagos. No arrests have been made.

v. 12/2002 UNPP member Isyaku Mohammed was killed by unknown assailants in Kano State. No arrests have been made.

w. 2/2003 PDP founding member Marshall Harry was killed by unknown assailants in Abuja. From Rivers State, Harry had jumped to the ANPP and was spearheading ANPP Presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari's campaign efforts in the South-South area. Arrests were made, but the only eyewitness claims that the police have arrested the wrong suspects. No trial has been scheduled.

Numerous other threats and attacks have taken place within these timeframes, and this cable does not deal with the many attacks and killings directly related to the conduct of the 2003 elections.

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HOW THE ELECTION CHANGED ASSASSINATIONS  
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14. (C) Of the above incidents, the Dikibo, Agom, Ogbeh, Tinubu, Ngige, Harry, Nwankwo, Ige, Olagbaju and Yauri attacks are thought to be connected to national politics. The most notorious during the 2003 election campaign were the killings of Ige, Olagbaju, Nwankwo and Harry. The popular view is that the PDP faced difficulties winning the election in the three northern zones of Nigeria, so it thought it had to make absolutely certain it would win the southern three zones.

-- Bola Ige, an AD chieftain, had joined the 1999 Obasanjo PDP cabinet. He had determined to stand against Obasanjo and the PDP in the Southwest in 2003, however, and had begun laying plans to refocus the AD's party platform in the area.

-- Olagbaju had connections to Osun Deputy Governor Omisore, who is now on trial for Ige's death.

-- Harry and Nwankwo were apparently killed to keep them from using their money and influence against the PDP in the critical Southeast and South-South areas during the 2003 elections.

15. (S/NF) Now that the elections have returned the PDP to power, the more recent wave of attacks on Dikibo, Agom, Ogbeh, Tinubu, Ngige and Yauri appear to be intra-PDP affairs. Former Minister of Works Tony Anenih and Presidential Adviser Andy Uba are widely thought to be using threats, intimidation and assassinations in order to install Anenih as the next PDP party chairman, and PDP Governor Orji Kalu has openly accused Anenih of plotting to assassinate him. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Sule Lamido is also often fingered as a partner in these activities.

16. (S/NF) Dikibo, Agom and Yauri certainly were members of the PDP's party hierarchy that Anenih had been attempting to replace. Agom, whose death is publicly viewed as collateral damage from an attack on Benue State Governor Akume, could as easily have been the intended victim (or one of two intended victims). The reports of the attack on Akume's motorcade do not coincide with the photos of the victims and some are

asking whether Akume himself was part of the attack to eliminate Agom. While Ngige and Yauri apparently were involved in automobile accidents, not an uncommon occurrence in Nigeria, they were on the same day. Ngige's history of troubles and a letter Yauri sent to the Inspector General of Police alleging threats to his life (similar to Kalu's accusation) just prior to the accident raise serious questions that have not been answered.

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IF ALL POLITICS ARE LOCAL,  
PERHAPS SO ARE POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS  
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17. (S/NF) A different, but widely held, view is that national politics is becoming mostly a rivalry between the state governors and central PDP officials like Anenih, Uba and Lamido. Certainly many of the governors have voiced to poloffs that they fear the center. The center has good reason to fear them; a collection of state governors almost denied Obasanjo the PDP nomination before the 2003 election, and the governors have increased their power in recent local elections (reftel).

18. (C) Local politics can be just as dangerous as national, even when ethnic conflicts are not involved. Kwara state has become as famous for political murders as Anambra is for political chicanery. Kwara PDP kingpin Dr. Olusola Saraki was successful at installing his son as governor and his daughter as senator, both on the PDP ticket. Originally with the ANPP, Saraki jumped ship over disagreements with the former ANPP Governor of Kwara. Saraki's move into the Kwara PDP threatened to displace some from its leadership. In 2002, Kwara lost two PDP party chairmen in quick succession, including Pategi from the list above. Several more death threats, "assassination attempts," and continuous inter-party clashes kept the situation boiling there until the elections. Saraki appears to have the upper hand for the moment, but the history of Kwara suggests that his opponents are not ready to "live and let live."

19. (C) Taraba State Governor Jolly Nname recently accused his Deputy Governor and the state's Commissioner of Works of attempting to assassinate him. The Deputy Governor was impeached and the Commissioner is reportedly in jail. Nigerian "democracy" is pretty rough all over, something we will analyze septel.

ROBERTS